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March 20, 1959

MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT
March 17, 1959

Others present: Messrs. Herter, Murphy, Merchant
Gerard Smith, McElroy, Quarles
Twining, Irwin, Persons, G. Grand
General Goodpaster



Mr. Herter handed the President a memorandum relating to contingency planning. The President asked a number of questions to clarify and sharpen up the significance of some of the points made, for example on the question of flying above 10,000 feet, and on the question of "stamping" documents. The President said that he understood the difficulty of stamping is really Chancellor Adenauer -- that he would be inclined to agree with Defense's de-emphasis on stamping except for Adenauer's position.

The President then asked questions regarding the proposal for the use of force locally. Answers were not completely clear as to the significance of the term "local."

The President also asked regarding the possibility of a program of reprisals such as stopping trading and breaking relations. The key point here is the extent to which our allies would stand with us in this matter. Again the answers were not completely clear, although State representatives indicated that these questions are receiving consideration.

General Twining mentioned the suggestions that have been made for "heckling" operations such as blockade. The President said we should not go into blockade until we have had such provocation that this would be reprisal rather than pressure.

The President next indicated he had a question as to the arming of the first convoy. Mr. Herter indicated the purpose of this is to put the onus on the other side to make the first use of force.

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Mr. McElroy said that the men in the convoy always have side arms. He stressed the need for more factual information as to just what the situation is at the check points. He said it would be planned to send photographic equipment along with the convoy to provide a record of just what happened. The President asked whether members of the press would be sent in. Mr. Merchant thought they might, in correspondents' uniforms.



With regard to the suggestions of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mr. McElroy said he has opposed sending a 7,000 man increase in strength to Europe. General Twining said General Norstad's chief purpose is to stop the cutback now going on in certain support units. Mr. McElroy said he is inclined to think this is a step to have in mind to do when we want to gain some special effect. The President recalled that his thought was that if we keep extra personnel in Europe, we should not ask the Army to make compensatory cuts elsewhere.

The President next noted the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommendation for compensatory replacement for any USAREUR divisions moved up to North Germany to form a composite force, and returned to his question as to what was meant by "local action." General Twining said it was of the order of one division reinforced, having in mind that if the job can't be done with a force of this size we had better shift to some other mode of action. Mr. McElroy confirmed that when we do that the "fat is in the fire."

Mr. Herter next raised the question of concessions for the sake of unity. The President said that negotiation always implies some flexibility. It is not possible to specify the extent to which we will modify in general terms. Some things can be modified but some cannot.

The President next asked when we will make moves that would be visible, for example the removal of dependents. Governor Herter said that would come the minute we are blocked. There was some doubt as to whether dependents could get out in those circumstances. Mr. Quarles said we have assumed that civilian travel would continue. The President asked that a reference to "political negotiations having


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failed" be changed to something like "political negotiations having failed to resolve the situation."

The President asked Mr. Herter to be ready to review this contingency planning with Macmillan, having additional people present for the discussion as might be required.


A. J. Goodpaster
Brigadier General, USA



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